

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF
POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART

Fifth Series

ESTABLISHED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS, 1832

CONDUCTED BY R. CHAMBERS (SECUNDUS)

No. 62.—VOL. II.

SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 1885.

PRICE 1½d.

IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

AMONG the facts that every schoolboy knows are many which most men and women have forgotten. Even those familiar on our tongues, few of us fully realise. That the last century has been pre-eminently the age of inventions which have changed the face of the world is the tritest of commonplaces. But the extent and variety of the mechanical, and still more of the industrial and social reorganisation effected by two or three great inventions, we seldom bear in mind, and our children seem likely to forget. The order of the civilised world has undergone a greater revolution in that period than perhaps in any preceding millennium. We all know that the land has been intersected with a network of canals, railways, and telegraphs; that seas have been joined, underlaid with telegraphic cables, and covered with fleets moving independent of wind and wave. But it is difficult for a strong imagination fully to realise the yet greater social and industrial revolution that steam has caused.

We know, but hardly remember, that the greatest single manufacture in the world is scarcely a hundred years old. Steam has obtained an absolute monopoly of textile manufactures, gathering multitudes of men, women, and children in gigantic establishments to work under conditions and perform functions scarcely less mechanical than those of the countless spindles, the endless rows of mules and looms they no longer direct, but watch and serve. The economical gain is enormous, and felt by every family within reach of European commerce. The social and moral consequences are more questionable; although the grosser evils originally attending the sudden and enormous growth of the system have been almost entirely corrected.

Marvellous as have been the inventions of the recent past, stupendous as are the changes they have effected, inventions in actual progress or 'within measurable distance' of attainment promise even greater results. Metallurgists are

in active pursuit of cheap aluminium; and cheap aluminium might prove a scarcely less valuable possession, a scarcely less revolutionary industrial agent, than iron itself. Incorrodible as gold, beautiful as silver, threefold lighter, strength for strength, than iron, even more useful to the electrician than copper, aluminium promises to be the most serviceable, as it is one of the most abundant of metals. Hitherto, however, the difficulty of separating it from its ores has rendered it at least one-half as costly as silver. It has been obtained, we believe, only from the chloride, and only through the action of sodium, another abundant but comparatively irreducible metal. But no chemist doubts that it may, most expect that it will, soon be obtainable by some comparatively cheap and simple process from common ores like its silicate, which forms the basis of clay. Were it as cheap as iron, it might supersede iron for almost all purposes. Aluminium ships would need no copper sheathing, would be as strong as steel, and but one-third of the weight. Aluminium furniture would be lighter and far more elegant than either wood or iron; aluminium machinery would be clean and light, would not soil the hands of the workers with rust or oil. Aluminium utensils would be far handier than iron, safe as tin, and even less corrodible than copper. Aluminium spoons and forks would certainly supersede electro-plate and every other substitute for silver. Railway engines and carriages made of aluminium would reduce probably by one-half the dead-weight of the train. Infrangible glass is another by no means impossible or incredible achievement of the future; and infrangible glass, especially with the aid of cheap aluminium, might improve almost indefinitely our inconvenient, absurd, and uncomfortable domestic architecture.

But the paramount invention, the master-agent of the future, is electricity. The delay of electric lighting, which has greatly disappointed public expectation, is due less to unforeseen and by no means insuperable difficulties—less to cost, which would be speedily and steadily reduced—than to

injudicious legislation; which, too eager to protect the public interest, has placed the holders of electric patents under apparently unfair and certainly unacceptable conditions. But the electric light is an accomplished fact, accomplished in forms severally suitable for street, theatrical, factory, and domestic use. For rooms large or small, the little 'Swan' lamp, single or by twos and threes, realises the ideal perfection of artificial light. It has neither glare nor heat nor smoke; it is bright, soft, and steady, and as it can be placed close to the ceiling, need affect the eyes no more than diffused sunshine. Electricity will supersede gas as certainly as gas superseded oil and wax and tallow. Thus cheapened, gas will probably supersede coal as the fuel of electric engines and of domestic use. Conservatories and hothouses lighted with electricity will allow the florist and fruit-grower to try new experiments in forcing, acclimatising; creating artificial seasons at his pleasure. Heretofore, he could obtain summer heat, but not the prolonged light which is equally essential. The alleged danger from the wires is far less than that from gas, which we regard with so much indifference. There is no peril of leaking or bursting pipes, accidents and explosions without the interference and beyond the control of the household. For one man who, recklessly laying hold of communicating wires, may be painlessly killed, a score are now burnt or blown up, blinded or maimed, by gas accidents utterly beyond their own control. The children of the next generation will bless the invention which allows the parent to leave them a light brighter than gas, and beyond the reach of careless or mischievous fingers. The perfection of the telephone is no extravagant dream of sanguine credulity. Our children may, and probably will, live to communicate by word of mouth between Liverpool and London, Leeds and Glasgow, if not between London and Paris, or even between Liverpool and New York. Very probably they may see the telephone a common article of domestic convenience. Married daughters and sisters may be able to hold daily converse with their distant homes; men of business, as it is, give orders and instructions verbally, by a method which admits of question, explanation, and correction at the moment.

But the peculiar interest and incalculable potential importance of electricity lies in its character as a motive-power, or rather, perhaps, as a vehicle of motive-force. It differs from all others hitherto employed in several vital particulars. It is capable of easy and infinite subdivision, of storage and of employment at an indefinite distance. These characteristics may have consequences as yet undreamed of, or dreamed of not by men of science, but by observant and somewhat Utopian speculative thinkers. The first and most obvious consequence relates to the sources of power. At present, nearly all the motive-power employed in wholesale locomotion by land and sea, in manufactures, and in every form of industry—the only motive-force except that of human and animal muscle at man's command, save in a few favoured localities—is derived from coal. Water and wind power might be had gratis; but as compared with the steam-power supplied by coal, even water-power is worth having only where it is

supplied under specially advantageous conditions, and where coal is distant and costly. But coal, the stored and petrified forests of former ages, is absolutely limited in quantity; though the as yet undeveloped coal-fields of America and India, not to mention others, promise to supply the consumption of mankind for an indefinite period. Our English coal-fields with the present and prospective output, cannot be expected to last for ever. It may be very long before the whole coal will be used up; but that which is accessible at moderate depths without enormous increase in the cost of production will not last two or three centuries at the present constantly increasing rate of consumption. We want so much coal to supply heat for chemical and domestic purposes, that we cannot long afford to make it our sole source of motive-power. This may seem a needless or exaggerated alarm; but at all events, could we find a cheap means of rendering available the force supplied gratis by nature, the use of artificial motive-power, by which the progress of material civilisation may be roughly measured, would proceed far more rapidly, evenly, and cheaply than while we depend on coal alone.

Now, electricity promises to furnish just what we want—a means of converting the waste forces of nature into an available form. How vast those forces are, only scientific men are at all aware. The heat of the sun, the wind, the water-power of the world's innumerable rivers—above all, that supplied by the motion of the world itself, the force of the tides—afford, each and every one of them, a supply of force incomparably greater than all the possible coal-fields of the earth can practically furnish. Sanguine electricians tell us that each and all of these can be rendered available as sources of electric motive-power. One eminent inventor already lights his house with electricity derived from the water-power of a small stream some furlongs distant. It would be just as easy to apply that power to work sewing-machines, lifts, sawpits, or a local railway. The smallest waterfall, the force of an utterly neglected stream, could furnish half-a-dozen households with motive-power sufficient for all domestic purposes to which machinery could be applied. The Thames could light London, and have force yet to spare for all the machinery of every factory on its banks. True that the waste, both in conversion and application, will be great; that is to say, we shall obtain half, perhaps not a quarter, possibly not more than a tithe of the force which sun and wind, stream and tide, can supply. But we need not calculate or grudge the waste of force that costs nothing, and which as yet is absolutely wasted.

Another important point in the promise if not the performance of electricity is the power of storage. We cannot store up steam or wind or sun-heat in their native form; but each of them may be made the source of electricity that can be stored. Boxes of electric force originally supplied by coal or water-power, or it might be by the tide or by the sails of a windmill, can furnish light to a household, motive-power to a tricycle or a sewing-machine. As yet, the power of storage is inconveniently limited; that is, the boxes are inconveniently large and heavy. But electricians expect to find means of storing a very much larger power in very much smaller

bulk. When this is done, a locomotive, a boat, a carriage, or a tricycle can be supplied at starting with a portable motive-power of an amount capable of driving it for so many hours at an ascertained speed. The importance of this peculiar capacity of electric force is obvious. Windmills were abandoned, in spite of the cheapness of their motive-power, simply because it could not be stored; because they could work only when the wind happened to blow, and blow briskly. In a word, the sources of electric force are absolutely unlimited; and those that work most unevenly are scarcely the less available, since the power they supply can be laid up in reserve.

But among all the characteristics of the new force, probably the most important, especially in the social and industrial aspect, are its divisibility and conductivity. Niagara, they say, could supply all the factories of the States with water-power; but that power could heretofore be turned to account only on the spot, and therefore only an infinitesimal part of the limitless supply could have been available. As matter of fact, the whole of this vast reservoir of power has been left unused. So little of it could have been utilised, that it was not worth while to disfigure the magnificent natural scenery of that unrivalled gorge. But, converted into electric force, the water-power of Niagara might be conveyed to an indefinite distance, and distributed in amounts large or small to suit the needs of factories or of families. This is of course an extreme illustration rather than a practical example. The potentialities of electricity are not accomplished facts, but neither are they mere speculations. The conversion, the storage, the conveyance, and the distribution have all been achieved upon a small scale and in an imperfect form; that the scale can be enlarged and the methods improved almost indefinitely, those least doubt who have most deeply studied the subject.

The cheapness of conveyance, the distribution of force, may well apply a powerful check to the most formidable and most unpleasant tendency of modern civilisation, the aggregation of human beings in vast, unmanageable, unwholesome dreary cities; for nothing can make vast masses of stone and brick and mortar, endless lines of street, otherwise than dreary, unpleasant, unwholesome, in comparison with the fresh air and natural beauty of the open country. When motive-power can be distributed indefinitely, the city will have no necessary, indispensable, irresistible economic advantage over the village. Aggregation and division of labour must always be more or less economical; but the spinner and weaver may well be content to earn ten or fifteen per cent. less for the sake of independence. Fathers and husbands may well choose that wives and daughters should earn twenty shillings at home, rather than twenty-five or thirty shillings under the rigid discipline and in the promiscuous society of the great factory. Should this prove possible, women will be able to earn their bread without neglecting their homes, to work eight, nine, or ten hours a day, but not continuously; with less fatigue, with perfect freedom, with liberty to rest, or to interrupt their handicraft in order to mind their children,

to cook the meal, and keep the house clean and comfortable.

All the artistic handicrafts, all those in which individual skill, taste, and feeling are important, will tend to segregation, when the indispensable aid of machinery can be supplied almost as easily to the single artisan as to the thousand hands of a great establishment. The tendency at present is to compulsory concentration, as more and more is done by machinery, and less and less by independent human skill and strength. But when independent human skill and strength can have the aid of machinery and motive-power without foregoing independence and individual liberty, half the evils of the system, and all the heartburning that it at present excites, will gradually and naturally pass away. Thus, electricity promises not indeed to reverse, but to check the social action of steam. Congregated labour will still occupy a large part, probably far the greater part of the industrial field. But electricity promises to preserve to individual independent industry all that it still retains, and to restore much that it has lost. When men can find separate and independent employment—when women and children can earn a living without quitting the domestic sphere—when the factories, therefore, depend on volunteers, no longer confined to Hobson's choice, the reforms which it now seems difficult and almost impossible to introduce, will enforce themselves.

To predict that electricity will achieve such results, even to affirm confidently that such will be its tendency, would be rash and unreasonable. But this at least is clear, that electricity admits of application, and almost indefinite application to isolated handicrafts and domestic convenience. The application of artificial motive-power in the smallest workshops to aid the individual labourer may not be economical, but it will be possible. The domestic use of machinery, which has hitherto been a more or less Utopian dream, will be brought within the sphere of practical effort. All men of mechanical tastes and knowledge are aware how much steam might do to lighten the labours, to add to the comfort of domestic life, were it practically possible to make the steam-engine a common domestic convenience. What cannot be done with steam can be done with electricity. The rougher mechanical labour of all but the smallest establishments—pumping water, cleaning knives, turning the mangle and the sewing-wheel, may be done ten, fifteen, or thirty years hence, if not without human care, at least without muscular effort. Electric vehicles alone would add enormously to the comfort of daily life, as to the convenience of business. Of all domestic luxuries, a carriage is perhaps the most universally and reasonably coveted, the first, though the most reluctantly, abandoned. How much it contributes to health as well as to enjoyment—how the privation is felt by over-tasked or weakly women accustomed to, but compelled to resign it, those only know who have tried. Electricity may in a few years furnish an available substitute, a cheap and convenient means of conveyance; bring fresh air and change of scene, the refreshment and delight of a frequent country drive, within the reach of all who have leisure to enjoy them, of tired men and feeble women, of invalids and children.

The dull conservatism, the slow improvement of domestic economy, contrast signally and strangely with the rapid progress of industrial organisation. Men of business tolerate in their homes an expense, a neglect of well-known and simple improvements, an adhesion to obsolete, extravagant, inconvenient methods, a waste of labour which would be impossible in the severe competition of business. At a moderate estimate, one-third of our domestic labour runs to waste for lack of two or three familiar and obvious contrivances. Factories, clubs, and hotels have long since adopted as necessary economies improvements which are still wanting alike in the most luxurious and the most economical families. The carriage of water, for example, is a scandalous and needless tax on servants' strength, a wanton waste of highly-paid labour. A comparatively slight expenditure would furnish our houses with the far simpler, cleaner, and more convenient arrangement of our clubs. Coal-fires, open fire-places, ill-constructed chimneys, double the cost of fuel, and, together with the incompleteness of water-service, probably take up the time of one servant in four. The root of the mischief is, of course, that houses are built by speculators and rented for short terms. No man of sense, building for himself on land of his own, would dream of adopting the almost invariable construction of town and suburban houses—the rotten foundations, the thin walls, the insanitary arrangements, the absence of all mechanical appliances to secure comfort and save labour; and the same wretched system will doubtless delay the adoption of the yet greater facilities proffered by electricity. But the senseless, comfortable, wasteful system of the present cannot last for ever, deeply as the division of interests from which it arises is unhappily rooted in our economic system. The ground landlord, secure of his rent, cares for nothing else. The builders, as a body, with their forty, sixty, or eighty years' leases, and a monopoly of ground within reach of business centres, will spend nothing to attract tenants, who, go where they will within the limits imposed on them, can find nothing better. The tenant cannot spend money on the improvement of a stranger's property. Not one house in ten, therefore, is furnished with a sensible kitchen range, not one in fifty has a decent or economic water-service, not one in a thousand a single arrangement for saving labour or fuel, or securing health or comfort.

Happily, a reaction is here and there discernible. The very costliness of ground has led to the construction of buildings whose size renders solidity indispensable. English families detest flats; flats, therefore, must be made attractive by conveniences not found in independent houses. The absence of stairs—in itself an enormous saving of labour—is not sufficient; the economies and comforts familiar to clubs and hotels must be introduced. The flats may be expected to raise gradually but surely the absurdly low and worse than antiquated standard of independent dwellings; and when flats are lighted by electricity and furnished with motive-power, the contrast of comfort and convenience will be too glaring; will provoke a strong, persistent, irresistible demand for common-sense, decency, and rational arrangement in the construction of houses intended

for the same class of tenants, and now brought for the first time into competition with honestly built and sensibly constructed dwellings. And if, as seems probable, electricity should gradually increase the facility of locomotion, and extend the permissible distance between men's dwellings and their work, a greater range of choice may enforce a competition not merely of cheapness, but of honest, sensible, economic construction.

A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF.

BY MRS OLIPHANT.

CHAPTER X.

THE revelation which thus burst upon Mr Durant was known throughout the length and breadth of Bordighera, as that good man said, before the day was out. The expression was not so inappropriate as might be at first supposed, considering the limited society to which the fact that Mr Waring had a second daughter was of any particular interest; for the good chaplain's own residence was almost at the extremity of the Marina, and General Gaunt's on the highest point of elevation among the olive gardens; while the only other English inhabitants were in the hotels near the beach, and consisted of a landlady, a housekeeper, and the highly respectable person who had charge of the stables at the Bellevue. This little inferior world was respectfully interested but not excited by the new arrival.

But to Mrs Durant and Tasie it was an event of the first importance; and Mrs Gaunt was at first disposed to believe that it was a revelation of further wickedness, and that there was no telling where these discoveries might end. 'We shall be hearing that he has a son next,' she said. They had a meeting in the afternoon to talk it over; and it really did appear at first that the new disclosure enhanced the enormity of the first; for, naturally, the difference between a widower and a married man is aggravated by the discovery that the deceiver pretending to have only one child has really 'a family.' At the first glance, the ladies were all impressed by this; though afterwards, when they began to think of it, they were obliged to admit that the conclusion perhaps was not very well founded. And when it turned out that Frances and the new-comer were twins, that altogether altered the question, and left them, though they were by no means satisfied, without anything further to say.

While all this went on outside the Palazzo, there was much going on within it that was calculated to produce difficulty and embarrassment. Mr Waring, with a consciousness that he was acting a somewhat cowardly part, ran away from it altogether, and shut himself up in his library, and left his daughters to make acquaintance with each other as they best could. He was, as has been said, by no means sufficiently at his ease to return to what he called his studies, the ordinary occupations of his life. He had run away, and he knew it. He went so far as to turn the key in one door, so that, whatever happened, he could only be invaded from one side, and sat down uneasily in the full conviction that from moment to moment

he might be called upon to act as interpreter or peacemaker, or to explain away difficulties. He did not understand women, but only his wife, from whom he had taken various prejudices on the subject; neither did he understand girls, but only Frances, whom, indeed, he ought to have known better than to suppose either that she was likely to squabble with her sister, or call him in to mediate or explain. Frances was not at all likely to do either of these things; and he knew that; yet lived in a vague dread, and did not even sit comfortably on his chair, and tried to distract his mind with a novel—which was the condition in which he was found by Mr Durant. The clergyman's visit did him a little good, giving him at once a grievance and an object of ridicule. During the rest of the day, he was so far distracted from his real difficulties as to fall from time to time into fits of secret laughter over the idea of having been in all unconsciousness a source of danger for Tasie. He had never been a gay Lothario, as he said; but to have run the risk of destroying Tasie's peace of mind was beyond his wildest imagination. He longed to confide it to somebody; but there was no one with whom he could share the fun. Constance perhaps might have understood; but Frances! He relapsed into gravity when he thought of Frances. It was not the kind of ludicrous suggestion which would amuse her.

Meanwhile, the girls, who were such strangers to each other, yet so closely bound by nature, were endeavouring to come to a knowledge of each other by means which were much more subtle than any explanation their father could have supplied; so that he might, if he had understood them better, have been entirely at his ease on this point. As a matter of fact, though Constance was the cleverer of the two, it was Frances who advanced most quickly in her investigations, for the excellent reason, that it was Constance who talked, while Frances, for the most part having nothing at all interesting to say of herself, held her peace. Frances had been awakened at an unusually late hour in the morning, for the agitation of the night had abridged her sleep at the other end—by the sounds of mirth which accompanied the first dialogue between her new sister and Mariuccia. The Italian which Constance knew was not very much, and it was of a finer quality than any with which Mariuccia was acquainted; but still they came to some sort of understanding, and both repudiated the efforts of Frances to explain. And from that moment Constance had kept the conversation in her hands. She did not chatter, nor was there any appearance of loquacity in her; but Frances had lived much alone, and had been taught not to disturb her father when she was with him, so that it was more her habit to be talked to than to talk. She did not even ask many questions; they were scarcely necessary; for Constance, as was natural, was full of herself and of her motives for the step she had taken. These revelations gave Frances new lights almost at every word.

'You always knew, then, about us?' Frances said. She had intended to say 'about me,' but refrained, with mingled modesty and pride.

'Oh, certainly. Mamma always writes, you know, at Christmas, if not oftener. We did not

know you were here. It was Markham who found out that. Markham is the most active-minded fellow in the world. Papa does not much like him. I daresay you have never heard anything very favourable of him; but that is a mistake. We knew pretty well about you. Mamma used to ask that you should write, since there was no reason why, at your age, you should not speak for yourself; but you never did. I suppose he thought it better not.'

'I suppose so.'

'But I should not myself have been restrained by that,' said Constance. 'I think very well on the whole of papa; but obedience of that sort at our age is too much; I should not have obeyed him. I should have told him, that in such a matter I must judge for myself. However, if one learns anything as one grows up,' said this young philosopher, 'it is that no two people are alike. I suppose that was not how the subject presented itself to you?'

Frances made no reply. She wondered what she would have said had she been told to write to an unknown mother. Ought she to do so now? The idea was a very strange one to her mind, and yet what could be more natural? It was with a sense of precipitate avoidance of a subject which must be contemplated fully at an after-period, that she said hurriedly: 'I have never written letters. It did not come into my head.'

'Ah!' said Constance, looking at her with a sort of impartial scrutiny. Then she added with a sequence of thoughts which it was not difficult to follow: 'Don't you think it is very odd that you and I should be the same age?'

Frances felt herself grow red, and the water came to her eyes. She looked wistfully at the other, who was so much more advanced than she felt herself to be. 'I suppose—we ought to have been like each other,' she said.

'We are not, however, a bit. You are like mamma. I don't know whether you are like her in mind; but on the outside. And I am like him. It is very funny. It shows that one has these peculiarities from one's birth; it couldn't be habit or association, as people say, for I have never been with him—neither have you with mamma. I suppose he is very independent-minded, and does what he likes without thinking? So do I. And you consider what other people will say, and how it will look, and a thousand things.'

It did not seem to Frances that this was the case; but she was not at all in the habit of studying herself, and made no protest. Did she consider very much what other people would say? Perhaps it was true. She had been obliged, she reflected, to consider what Mariuccia would say; so that probably Constance was right.

'It was Markham that discovered you, after all, as I told you. He is invaluable; he never forgets; and if you want to find anything out, he will take any amount of trouble. I may as well tell you why I left home. If we are going to live together as sisters, we ought to make confidants of each other; and if you have to go, you can take my part.—Well, then! You must know there is a man in it. They say you should always ask, "Who is She?" when there is a row between men; and I am sure it is just as natural

to ask, "Who is He?" when a girl gets into a scrape.

The language, the tone, the meaning, were all new to Frances. She did not know anything about it. When there is a row between men; when a girl gets into a scrape: the one and the other were equally far from her experience. She felt herself blush, though she scarcely knew why. She shook her head when Constance added, though rather as a remark than as a question: 'Don't you know?—Oh, well; I did not mean, have you any personal experience, but as a general principle? The man in this case was well enough. Papa said, when I told him, that it was quite right; that I had better have made up my mind without making a fuss; that he would have advised me so, if he had known. But I will never allow that this is a point upon which any one can judge for you. Mamma pressed me more than a mother has any right to do—to a person of my age.'

'But, Constance, eighteen is not so very old.'

'Eighteen is the age of reason,' said the girl somewhat imperiously; then she paused and added—'in most cases, when one has been much in the world, like me. Besides, it is like the middle ages when your mother thinks she can make you do what she pleases and marry as she likes. That must be one's own affair. I must say that I thought papa would take my part more strongly, for they have always been so much opposed. But after all, though he is not in harmony with her, still the parents' side is his side.'

'Did you not like—the gentleman?' said Frances. Nothing could be more modest than this question, and yet it brought the blood to her face. She had never heard the ordinary badinage on this subject, or thought of love with anything but awe and reverence, as a mystery altogether beyond her and out of discussion. She did not look at her sister as she put the question. Constance lay back in the long wicker-work chair, well lined with cushions, which was her father's favourite seat, with her hands clasped behind her head, in one of those attitudes of complete *abandon* which Frances had been trained to think impossible to a girl.

'Did I like—the gentleman? I did not think that question could ever again be put to me in an original way. I see now what is the good of a sister. Mamma and Markham and all my people had such a different way of looking at it. You must know that *that* is not the first question, whether you like the man. As for that, I liked him—well enough. There was nothing to—dislike in him.'

Frances turned her eyes to her sister's face with something like reproach. 'I may not have used the right word. I have never spoken on such subjects before.'

'I have always been told that men are dreadful prudes,' said Constance. 'I suppose papa has brought you up to think that such things must never be spoken of. I'll tell you what is original about it. I have been asked if he was not rich enough, if he was not handsome enough, if he had not a good enough title, and I have been asked if I loved him, which was nonsense; I have not known him long enough. I could answer all that; but you I can't answer.'

Don't I like him? I was not going to be persecuted about him. It was Markham who put it into my head. "Why don't you go to your father," he said, "if you won't hear reason? He is just the sort of person to understand you, if we don't." So, then, I took them at their word. I came off—to papa.'

'Does Markham dislike papa? I mean, doesn't he think?—'

'I know what you mean. They don't think that papa has good sense. They think him romantic, and all that. I have always been accustomed to think so too. But the curious thing is that he isn't,' said Constance with an injured air. 'I suppose, however foolish one's father may be for himself, he still feels that he must stand on the parents' side.'

'You speak,' said Frances, with a little indignation, 'as if papa was likely to be against—his children: as if he were an enemy.'

'Taking sides is not exactly being enemies,' said Constance. 'We are each of our own faction, you know. It is like Whigs and Tories. The fathers and mothers side with each other, even though they may be quite different, and not get on together. There is a kind of reason in it. Only, I have always heard so much of papa as unreasonable and unlike other people, that I never thought of him in that light. He would be, though, except that for the present I am such a stranger, and he feels bound to be civil to me. If it were not for his politeness, he is capable of being medieval too.'

'I don't know what medieval means,' said Frances, with much heat, indignant to hear her father thus spoken of as a subject for criticism. Perhaps she had criticised him in her time, as children use; but silently, not putting it into words, which makes a great difference. And besides, what one does one's self in this way is quite another matter. As she looked at this girl, who was a stranger, though in some extraordinary way not a stranger, a momentary pang and impotent sudden rage against the web of strange circumstances in which she felt herself caught and bewildered, flamed up in her mild eyes and mind, unaccustomed to complications. Constance took no notice of this sudden passion.

'It means bread and water,' she said with a laugh, 'and shutting up in one's own room, and cutting off of all communication from without. Mamma, if she were driven to it, is quite capable of that. They all are—rather than give in; but as these are not the middle ages, they have to give in at last. Perhaps, if I had thought that what you may call his official character would be too strong for papa, I should have fought it out at home. But I thought he at least would be himself, and not a conventional parent. I am sure he has been a very queer sort of parent hitherto; but the moment a fight comes, he puts himself on his own side.'

She gave forth these opinions very calmly, lying back in the long chair, with her hands clasped behind her head, and her eyes following abstractedly the lines of the French coast. The voice which uttered sentiments so strange to Frances was of the most refined and harmonious tones, low, soft, and clear. And the lines of her slim elastic figure, and of her perfectly

appropriate dress, which combined simplicity and costliness, carelessness and consummate care, as only high art can, added to the effect of a beauty which was not beauty in any demonstrative sense, but rather harmony, ease, grace, fine health, fine training, and what, for want of a better word, we call blood. Not that the bluest blood in the world inevitably carries with it this perfection of tone; but Constance had the effect which a thoroughbred horse has upon the connoisseur. It would have detracted from the impression she made, had there been any special point upon which the attention lingered—had her eyes, or her complexion, her hands, or her hair, or any individual trait called for particular notice. But hers was not beauty of that description.

Her sister, who was, so to speak, only a little rustic, sat and gazed at her in a kind of rapture. Her heart did not, as yet at least, go out towards this intruder into her life; her affections were as yet untouched; and her temper was a little excited, disturbed by the critical tone which her sister assumed, and the calm frankness with which she spoke. But though all these dissatisfied, almost hostile sentiments were in Frances' mind, her eyes and attention were fascinated. She could not resist the influence which this external perfection of being produced upon her. It was only perhaps now in the full morning light, in the *abandon* of this confidence and candour, which had none of the usual tenderness of confidential revelations, but rather a certain half-disdainful self-discovery which necessity demanded, that Frances fully perceived her sister's gifts. Her own impatience, her little impulses of irritation and contradiction, died away in the wondering admiration with which she gazed. Constance showed no sign even of remarking the effect she produced. She said meditatively, dropping the words into the calm air without any apparent conception of novelty or wonder in them: 'I wonder how you will like it when you have to go.'

DOMESTIC SCHOOLS IN GERMANY.

IN England, indeed throughout the United Kingdom, schools of cookery—as described in this *Journal* for 6th December 1884—are gradually becoming a recognised national institution. Admirably conducted they are too; there is nothing of the 'young-ladyism' principle about them, for the teaching combines the kitchen-maid's with the cook's duties. The students must learn not only how to arrange the contents of a pan, but also how to clean it afterwards; how to prepare the fire, cleanse the flue, blacklead and polish the range; even to scrub the floor. If their position is above the need of making these as daily duties, the knowledge fits them for directing others, and thus preventing those domestic troubles, in the form of wastefulness of time and means, that too often mar the home-peace of young housekeepers. In some of these schools, efforts are made to add lessons in dressmaking and getting up fine linen. As yet, however, this is only tentative. Still, it shows that the spirit of educational energy is rousing the middle classes to raise even 'household cares' to the dignity of an art.

But with us, domestic instruction is confined to lectures and class-lessons given in courses for specified charges. We have no organised system of domestic education, such as exists in Germany. Even there, domestic schools are the comparatively recent introduction of private enterprise. They are increasing in number and influence, and may ultimately, as most things do there, meet with the paternal attentions of the government, and be expanded into public institutions. So far, they are on a simple, even homely scale. One at Freiburg, in Baden, is conducted by a lady who started it on her own resources of spirited energy. Suddenly deprived by adverse fortune of a leading social position, she resolved to utilise those talents which hitherto had been exercised only in the way of general household superintendence. Her reputation as a *Hausfrau* and for having the deffest fingers for needlework, had made her lady-friends regard her as a domestic authority. Acting on this, she decided on organising a school, modelled on one then acquiring repute in Berlin. Her only shortcoming was dressmaking, as taught on scientific principles of cutting out and blackboard drawing. With patient courage, she went to a large city, and there placed herself for some months under the necessary tuition; so that when her undertaking was fairly started, she was competent to fulfil all its responsibilities.

On one point, domestic schools differ from all other educational establishments—they are intended only for grown-up young ladies. Madame Kuenzer, at Freiburg, receives no pupil under fifteen to sixteen years of age, when school-books are closed, and a knowledge of home practical duties is required. Where it is desired to pursue accomplishments, arrangements are made for lessons in music, drawing, languages, &c. But these lie outside of the school scheme, which aims only at the prosaic utilities of domestic life; which, in fact, for the moment shuts out the drawing-room, and embraces the regions of the kitchen, the laundry, the workroom, and general household departments.

Germany's reputation for *Hausfrau*s has hitherto been too easily gained, on the strength of the custom for its young girls, especially on the eve of marriage, to put themselves for a few weeks under the *chef* at an hotel, or one holding sway in the kitchen of some great house. At Freiburg, for instance, the *chef* at the bishop's palace is often called on to direct young ladies' white hands in the making of pastry or stirring of sauces. At the domestic schools, however, such mere fancy-lessons are distinctly refused. Against them, Madame Kuenzer at once set her face, accepting only those pupils who wish to be thoroughly initiated in the whole course of domestic training, for which she considers twelve months not too long an apprenticeship. To secure this, her pupils must board and lodge with her, in a simple, homely, family-life sort of way. English fastidiousness might consider this way as primitively rough and ready, unless insular notions have been blunted by much brushing up against continental habits. To preserve the home character, Madame Kuenzer limits her school to ten or twelve pupils; a lady assists her to superintend the arrangements; servants are there as solid aids; the house is pleasantly situated; its young

inmates are busy as bees under their active directress, whose gracious manners and vivacity betray the partly French origin of her characteristics.

In the early mornings, at the quaint Market Place, one may meet Madame Kuenzer and two or three of her young pupils. They are busy pricing and buying the day's needs; the girls learning how to choose provisions, to modify extortionate market charges, and to keep a wary eye on just scale-weights. The girls left at home are occupied with room-cleaning, tidying, dusting, bed-making, &c. Some are told off to trim the lamps—a necessary duty in a foreign gasless house—or restore table and pantry order after the breakfast debris, for the preparations of which meal several had previously assisted. On the return of the 'marketers,' those whose turn it is flock into the kitchen. This is large and light; in the centre is the cooking-stove, open all round, and admitting four young cooks at a time—a veritable *multum in parvo* of hot and cold water arrangements, and utensil and implement compartments. Here the cooking lesson is given—getting ready the soup, a process in Germany of the most complicated nature; preparing the meat; washing, cleaning, cutting the vegetables; measuring and mixing spices and condiments; making and rolling the pastry; seeing after and stirring the sauces—for every dish at every course has a sauce, and that a different one—attending to the progress of the various pans on the fires in their boiling or simmering duties—the laborious operation of preparing a German dinner ending in results much appreciated by those who practically test it.

German cooking does not terminate with a meal. There are endless adjuncts that have to be prepared and kept ready. An English cook considers herself rather exemplary if she takes care of 'stock;' she often, too, seeks to enforce her general reputation by filling the house with nauseous odours from the 'rendering of fat.' With a German cook, the first is just a part of her daily routine; while in the latter respect she far surpasses her British sister by doing it on a more magnificent scale. For instance, she procures five or six pounds of raw mutton fat; after carefully paring, trimming, and cutting it into about half-pound pieces, she puts it into a pan on a slow fire. In another pan she puts the same number of pounds of pork fat similarly prepared. After some hours' simmering, the contents of the pans become perfectly liquid, and are then mixed together. Five or six pounds of butter, previously heated into positive oil, are stirred into them. The whole is then clarified, poured into a stone jar, left to cool, and serves for some months as cooking-butter. Then, also, a good *Hausfrau* has the coffee roasted at home. If in the cooking-butter operation, open windows have to be resorted to, in the coffee-roasting, open outdoors have to be added. Even then, one longs for 'all the perfumes of Arabia' to relieve olfactory sufferings!

Some of the cooking stock-in-trade, however, is of a more acceptable nature. There are the odd cuttings of bread, which are carefully kept until well hardened; they are then buttered over, and left a long time in a pan in the oven; then pestled and mortared into dust, and kept in reserve for frying fish, cutlets, &c. Sour cream, too, is care-

fully stored, as, mixed with yolk of eggs, it plays a large part in soups, &c. Then there are the pickling and preserving, which are the very coat of arms of German storeroom dignity; and all sorts of other preparations that must be kept ready for need.

Besides all these extraneous duties, there is the keeping in order of the numerous cooking utensils. The Germans have certainly a wonderfully inventive faculty for kitchen vessels and implements, the use of which, until the recent introduction by the schools of cookery of many of them, would have bewildered English housekeepers, but which in Germany are as invaluable as they are ingenious. To keep them in spotless condition is one of the lessons Madame Kuenzer's young pupils have to learn, as also to understand the methodical system of the cleaning, polishing, &c. of the kitchen and all its fixtures.

A more important lesson still is impressed on them—never to waste a fragment that can be utilised for present or after purposes. It is this kitchen economy in foreign households which marks so great a contrast with English wastefulness. It is to be hoped that our schools of cookery will reform all that.

While Madame Kuenzer's kitchen is full of bustle, the workroom, though quieter, is not less a scene of industry. A large room with four windows; a centre table where 'cutting-out' is practised; a blackboard whereon part of a dress is sketched for a pupil to copy by mathematical measurement, before venturing to mismanage material. The young girls are scattered about the room, at the windows or elsewhere, some at dressmaking; some at plain-sewing; some learning to mend stockings with the knitting-stitch, which, when well done, shakes credibility as to a previous hole. There is no need to teach actual knitting, for, as Spartan babies used to get spears as playthings, German baby-girls get knitting-needles as toys, and have their stockings ready by the time they can walk. At least, so jesters say, a still more incorrigible one declaring that, at the last trumpet-call, German women will arise placidly, stocking-knitting all the time! Madame Kuenzer's pupils, however, do not limit themselves to stockings. Endless are the knitted articles they turn out, both of a useful and an ornamental nature. Then there is a frame, curiously nail-tacked out in design, at which one of the girls is sitting, and really fabricates a shawl. Another is occupied making beaded lace. A third is busy re-fashioning an old dress, and re-piecing parts in a way to defy the cavils of the microscopic eye. New bonnets are being trimmed, or old ones modernised; or there is an umbrella getting re-covered; or fancy-shoes being renovated; or personal or household linen being darned in a way—if of damask material, the design is perfectly preserved—to defy the most critical scrutiny. In short, it would be difficult to give a comprehensive view of the varieties of needlework practised in that busy room.

On laundry-days, there is a great activity. For the washing of the heavy things, special laundresses are engaged. Still, the young girls look on and learn, while giving a helping hand. When ironing and clear-starching time arrives, the girls stand to the fore and receive regular working instructions. With the ordinary teaching

of 'getting up' linen, laces, muslins, &c., there is combined the secret of 'cleaning' stuff or silk dresses, carpets, coloured curtains and tablecloths, so as to restore to them a pristine freshness.

Wishing to prove to her friends that she had not mistaken her vocation, Madame Kuenzer arranged a sort of Exhibition of the varied labours of her pupils, and invited Freiburg 'Society' to come to it. The result was a chorus of wonder and praise, of which the girls received their due meed, while the largest share was given to the brave-hearted woman who had so boldly entered a new field, and now proved her success was deserved.

Madame Kuenzer, believing that all work and no play dulls girls as well as boys, provides various means of relaxation. She has her box at the theatre, to which those of her pupils who choose may join in the subscription, so as to take it in turn to accompany her. As this only amounts to eightpence per performance, there is no tendency to extravagance; and as the theatre opens at six o'clock and closes at nine, there is not much fear of encouraging dissipation. Neither is there toilet outlay, for a pair of gloves added to the home dress, with a shawl for the shoulders and a hood for the head as protection while quietly walking to and fro, are all that a lady deems necessary for the enjoyment of the always excellent performances at the theatre.

In snowy winters, when King Frost makes it hard and glistening, Madame Kuenzer takes her pupils on a sleigh picnic into the wonderful Black Forest, that almost incloses Freiburg in its mystical grandeur. In the summer-time, many are the delightful excursions that relax the labours of her busy young bees, who are thus led to think that a thorough training in the practical duties of life is worthy of acquisition in itself, and rendered none the less beneficial when brightened by such judicious recreations.

Is a domestic school so conducted possible in this country? As a boarding-school, it would be scarcely possible. But might not the present cookery schools be expanded into further branches of practical life? If the teaching were put within the means of 'small tradesmen's' daughters—from which class Madame Kuenzer mostly recruits her pupils—the undertaking could not but be a success.

THE FEN FLOOD.

A TALE OF THE LAST CENTURY.

IN THREE CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I.

'DID father say he would come home to-morrow, George?' asked Ruth Godfrey.

'Yes, Ruth; but he may be detained another day. I never knew so many cases at assizes before; and I reckon Harry Knott's case won't come on this side to-morrow anyway.' The speaker was a young man about twenty-five years of age, who had just entered the roomy kitchen of Greendykes farmhouse, travel-stained and tired. The shaggy dreadnought which he doffed was dripping wet.

'Well, well,' said Ruth, in a light tone, as she assisted the servant in setting out the supper-table, 'dad won't mind, I daresay. It ain't often he has a holiday; and he will have all the more time in Cambridge to buy our Christmas presents. I do hope he will bring me something handsome.'

'Ah, Ruth!' said George with a sigh, but with a good-humoured smile on his rather unintellectual face.

'Ah, Master George!' retorted the girl, with a dexterous imitation of his voice and manner, 'what harm is there in wishing that, I wonder?'

'Your head is always running on gewgaws and fairs and dancing, or something.'

'La! there now. And what should a young woman think about, sure? And if it comes to that, the "thinking" about them is the biggest part of them that falls to our share in the Fen. Dancing! Why, I haven't had a dance since last May-day, when Will Elliot'—

'Ruth! How can ye go on so! Can't ye see Master George is too tired to be plagued with your nonsense, wench?—Draw in your chair, George, and have a bit of supper, lad.'

The young man answered this invitation with alacrity. Ruth followed his example, with a colour slightly heightened, and with an unmistakable pout upon her lips. The last speaker was her mother. And now that the trio are enjoying their evening meal, we shall take the opportunity of introducing them to the reader.

Jabez Godfrey was tenant of Greendykes farm, in Stetton Fen, easy in his circumstances for one of his class, and simple in his manners and style of living, according to the primitive ways of the Fen farmers in those days—some ninety years ago—to which our true story relates. There was therefore nothing incongruous whatever in the fact that his wife and daughter should receive and entertain chance visitors in the roomy and comfortable kitchen, instead of in one of the two equally spacious sitting-rooms. The glories of the latter, with their chintz-covered chairs and couches, the old-fashioned spinet, the walls decorated with showy prints, and the floors of squares of red bricks, covered in the centre with Kidderminster, and the sides with untanned sheepskins, were indeed seldom revealed except on Sundays, on occasions of more formal hospitality, or when a visit was paid by the landlord or his agent.

Mrs Godfrey was seated in a cosy, leather-lined, and well-cushioned armchair, set on one side of the wide, hospitable-looking fireplace, now piled high with crackling logs. This position she invariably occupied from the time she was carried down-stairs in the morning until she was similarly assisted to her bedroom at night; for the old lady had some years ago partially lost the power of her limbs by paralysis. To look at her, a stranger would never have suspected her infirmity. She was plump and hearty; and her round, bright, kindly face showed no trace of suffering. Her laugh was genial and frequent; nor would she accept any condolence, however well meant, upon her condition, holding firmly to the conviction that she would one day recover from her affliction. Her armchair was her throne, from which she issued the necessary

mandates for the regulation of the household, and from which she could at the same time superintend their execution. She was a confirmed though harmless gossip, and was never so well pleased as when, in the long evenings, the kitchen was filled with the young and old of both sexes from amongst the scanty and scattered population of the Fen.

On the night to which our story refers, the weather was so boisterous and inclement as to have deterred every member of her usual coterie from venturing so far as Greendykes. The unexpected visit of George Thorpe was, therefore, more than usually gratifying, and the old dame pressed her hospitality upon him with exceptional effusion. She had the additional pleasure of getting news of her husband, who had been summoned to Cambridge as a witness in a poaching affray. But apart from these considerations, young Thorpe, a favourite of hers, was confident at all times of a sincere and hearty welcome. He was a good-looking young fellow, like most of the Fen men, high-featured, ruddy-cheeked, and blue-eyed. His figure was tall, somewhat spare, but well knit. He was dressed in velvet coat and vest—the *ne plus ultra* of dandyism among the young farmers at that period, white cord knee-breeches and gaiters, the latter concealed by a pair of bespattered riding-boots, which told plainly the condition of the roads over which he had passed. He was owner of a well-stocked freehold farm called Long Drove; considered a skilful agriculturist, and held in much respect by his neighbours. He was both good-natured and good-tempered, and, if not a brilliant, was at least a sensible and cheerful companion, and a staunch friend.

He had paid his attentions to Ruth Godfrey ever since that madcap had attained to womanhood—undividedly, though not uninterruptedly. The fact was, that whenever George had made up his mind to declare his passion and ask her to become his wife, she had invariably contrived to damp his flame and undo his resolution by some ill-timed escapade, or by a reception more frivolous and hoydenish than ordinary. He had been often told that he might choose a wife when and where he liked; and with pardonable conceit, had sometimes thought the same thing to himself, when wearied out by the airy humours and light-hearted coquetry of Ruth. He had also argued with himself, during his temporary fits of jealousy and offended self-love, that so fickle and volatile a girl could never make a good wife, and least of all a good farmer's wife. She was too fond of dress and amusement to settle down to the busy and laborious life of a farmer's helpmate; so that, under the influence of such reasoning, Thorpe had several times vowed to cease his attentions and even to forego her society. On one occasion, indeed, his resolve held good for an entire month, at the end of which, he met Ruth as she was leaving church; she smiled and shook hands; and, in short, he saw her home—a more infatuated man than ever.

Ruth Godfrey was a decidedly fine-looking young woman, of about twenty-three years of age, tall and full in figure, with a slightly aquiline profile, large, roguish, liquid brown eyes, wide but shapely mouth, and a superb set of teeth. The entire physique denoted an

unusual degree of vitality and strength, the sources no doubt of that exuberant animal spirits, which, combined with a quick intelligence and a warm heart, had earned for her all the hard names which her baffled lover sometimes secretly applied to her. How could a girl with her redundant health and vivacity be other than a madcap? And how, withal, could such a one, possessed at the same time of good looks, and more than a fair share of the freedom of her own will—how could such a one help acting now and then the character of an irreclaimable flirt? But appearances did Ruth's real disposition a good deal of injustice. Wayward she was, and tomboy, too, at times, as her mother said; but she was not only a clever housewife and an excellent dairy-manager, but also a shrewd business woman. Moreover, there were few more attentive and affectionate daughters than Ruth; and if she was sometimes wilful, she was at least never undutiful.

The fact is, neither George nor Ruth understood each other—no uncommon predicament with young folks. He considered Ruth far too mercurial—or, as he would have termed it, 'flighty'—to make a safe yoke-fellow; while she on her part thought George too soft and solemn—or, as she said, 'too wooden'—to make a mate that she could be proud of. Thus, although he was madly in love with the girl, and the girl was far from indifferent towards him, they still continued to live, in a sense, apart.

Supper ended, the young farmer made his excuses for the shortness of his visit, and rose to depart.

'Dearie, dearie, what an awful night, to be sure!' sighed Dame Godfrey, as she listened to the howling of the wind and the swishing of the rain upon the window. 'Had ye not better stay all night, George? They won't expect ye at hum, and ye can ride over as soon as it is daylight.'

George looked at Ruth as he struggled into his shaggy dreadnought, but Ruth looked steadily into the fire.

'Nay, mother. Thanks all the same. Maybe there'll be such-like weather to-morrow that I mightn't be able to ride,' he answered, looking serious.

Ruth and her mother both gave a quick, startled look; and the old lady, pushing her spectacles up to her cap, said sharply and nervously: 'What do ye mean, lad?'

'Nay; I mustn't frighten you. But the roads are hardly fit to travel, as it is; the sudden thaw and the melting of the snow have cut them up so. And then this rain! We had just such another night before the last "drown'd." If it holds on for twenty-four hours, the fen will get a soaking, I warrant.'

'Dear, dear, don't say so! I do wish Jabez was at hum;' and the brightness faded from the old lady's face.

'Oh! never mind George, mother,' said Ruth with some energy. 'He's a silly goose, and will be able to swim even if there is a "drown'd," as he calls it.' She cast a monitory glance at Thorpe, which he appeared to understand.

'Ah, well,' he said in a more cheery tone, 'I don't suppose it will be so bad as that neither. Anyhow, I will come over in the

morning and see things put straight, should it not clear up by then.'

'Do,' said Ruth, with an intelligent glance.—'And, George, do you know what Jennie has just been whispering to me?'

Here Jennie Swan, maid-of-all-work, who had been a perfectly silent listener, held up her hands in amazement.

'She has just been saying, or thinking at anyrate,' continued Ruth with a merry laugh, 'that you might bring that young fellow Tom Ashling along with you.'

'Oh, my! miss, how can you say so!' screamed Jennie, as she fled giggling to the shelter of the back kitchen.

George, assisted by another intelligent glance of the large brown eyes, contrived to comprehend the hint implied.

This by-play answered the purpose of distracting Mrs Godfrey's attention from the subject which young Thorpe had started by treating so seriously. The young farmer then inquired of a lanky, shock-headed lad who appeared at the door whether his nag was ready.

'All right, sir; nag's at the door,' answered the youth, holding up a lantern.

Thorpe then bade the old lady a cheerful good-night, and, followed by Ruth and Jennie, left the kitchen. Dobbin, as the gray roadster was named, stood pawing up to the fetlocks in water, and champing its bit with impatience. The night was black; the rain fell in torrents; and the wind whistled among the leafless tops of the gaunt poplars that skirted the road.

'Is the gate open, Bob?' asked Ruth; and receiving an affirmative from the lanky youth, she slipped on her pattens, took the lantern, and telling Jennie to follow her, preceded Thorpe, who had already mounted, across the yard. When the nag had reached the roadway, now a mere track of liquid mud, Ruth handed up the lantern to its rider, observing to him that it might be of use at a pinch. As she did so, the young farmer noticed that her face was pale and anxious-looking.

'Why, Ruth, lass, get ye indoors; you will catch cold,' he said.

'No fear, George, thank you. But I almost wish you could have stayed all night. The road must be dangerous.' Was it the cold or agitation that caused the voice to tremble a little?

'Oh, I shall be all right, lass,' answered Thorpe. 'I shall darken the lantern, and let Dobbin take his own way; and if he gets lost, I can then show him the road.—Get ye indoors, do. Good-night!' And as he pressed the soft, shapely hand held up to him, he thought he felt it tremble in his.

'Good-night, George—God bless you!' But the last words were borne away on the wind, without reaching the ears for which they were intended. As Ruth lingered a minute or two before closing the gate, she could hear at intervals the splashing of the horse's feet going at walking pace, and now and then the voice of the young farmer cheering the animal's efforts. Jennie and she waded back across the yard, the water reaching over both pattens and shoes, and entered the house. Doffing her pattens, Ruth went into the kitchen with a brisk and firm step and a cheery smile on her face, threw a fresh log

on the fire, and proceeded to mix a strong glass of mulled home-made wine for her mother, who regarded that pleasant drink both as a necessary night-cap and an admirable specific against ague. After this, Jennie and Ruth carried her up-stairs, undressed her, and put her to bed.

'I do wish yer father was at hum,' sighed the old lady, when Ruth had tucked her in and kissed her.

'He'll be home to-morrow, never fear, and will bring his old dear a new cap, I'll be bound. Good-night, dear mother.'

When she re-entered the kitchen, this girl, with her odd mixture of frivolousness and strength, directed Bob, who sat by the fire whistling, to take another lantern and visit the barn, the cow-shed, and the stables, to see that all was right. The floors of these buildings, she knew, were raised several feet above the level of the farm-yard, and were therefore safe against all except an extraordinary flood; but she wished to know that everything was secure. After conversing with Jennie for some time in a low voice, the two girls proceeded to the sitting-rooms, removed the carpets and rugs and all the lighter and more perishable articles one by one up-stairs, some to a large lumber-room, and others to the attics. This done, they did the same with the furniture of the kitchen, the contents of the pantry and dairy, and all articles which were likely to be of use, or which water could spoil. It was midnight before they had finished their task. Bob had reported that the horses and cattle were 'all right, but restless loike;' and that he had thrown several bundles of straw into the 'croos,' which were already flooded and the pigs almost afloat. After giving orders to Bob and Jennie to be up by five o'clock, they all retired to bed.

Alone with her own thoughts, these were too full of varied anxieties to admit of Ruth finding easily that happy oblivion which at other times came so readily to her pillow. The violence of the wind, which moaned in the chimneys and shrieked among the branches of the great chestnut tree outside her bedroom window, and the ceaseless pelt of the rain against the casement, spoke loud-tongued of the sure approach of the dangers she dreaded. She thought with a shudder of a similar catastrophe that had overtaken the Fen some ten years before. The consequences of a flood to the Fen farmer were always serious, sometimes ruinous; cattle, sheep, and horses often being drowned, stacks washed away, and garnered corn destroyed; besides many minor forms of misfortune. Ruth reflected that, in her father's absence, the whole responsibility devolved upon her mother and herself; nay, more, that her mother was an additional responsibility on her own shoulders, from her helpless condition, and the effect which any untoward event might have upon her health. Thoughts regarding her father's safety mingled with unavailing regrets at his absence. She was certain that if he had finished the business which took him to Cambridge, he would make every effort to reach home, and all the more strenuously because of the character of the weather. The roads in those days were wretched in the extreme, even in good weather, owing to the silty nature of the soil and the very imperfect drainage; while

in wet weather, or after the breaking up of frost, they were almost impassable even to light vehicles. In seasons of extraordinary rain, they assumed the appearance of a morass, and were dangerous even to travellers on horseback. When a downright flooding set in, such as young Thorpe anticipated, the roads, standing as they did only slightly above the surrounding lands, were entirely obliterated, and their whereabouts traceable only by trees or high hedgerows. Ruth's fears for her father's safety were, therefore, far from being so illusory as might be imagined, even should the storm abate towards morning.

Anon, the young girl's mind recurred to the incidents of the evening. Her reflections on the subject of George's visit were of a checkered nature. She smiled at his simplicity, was annoyed that he took her to task, but had a grateful respect for his unvarying kindness. Habit had made his visits an essential part of her daily life and thoughts. In short, Ruth cared more for the strapping young farmer than she had ever admitted to herself. But strange as it may appear, she had never thought seriously of marriage in connection with Thorpe or any other of the youths who had come a-wooing. She took an eager interest in all the love-affairs and match-makings from one end of Stetton Fen to the other, but herself remained if not 'fancy' at least promise 'free.' She was an only child, had a good home, and no anxieties for the future, and so perhaps saw no reason for seeking hurriedly a 'settlement in life,' as it is called. To do her justice, also, the wings of any inclination she might have had to fly the parent roof were clipped by her devotion to her mother, whose helplessness called for much care. She was at once a leal-hearted woman in the highest sense of the word, and a madcap as giddy as ever tantalised an infatuated follower. She teased and trifled with Thorpe unmercifully, and she knew it. There was only one redeeming point in her conduct towards him—she made no artful advances the one day, to retire coldly the next, but simply kept him at her apron-string, without permitting him to get an inch nearer his purpose of asking her to be his wife. She often appeared, as her mother told her, to exaggerate her own foibles, purposely to annoy him, and to act more of the tomboy than was natural even to her hoydenish spirit, as if bent on driving him off.

Some consciousness of this came over her as she turned uneasily on her pillow. Her mind was in that mood when self-chastisement becomes natural. She thought of him as he sat by the fire wincing under her thoughtless speeches; she thought of him as he stooped from his horse to take the lantern from her hand; and she thought long and shudderingly of the dangers of his journey home through 'storm and night and darkness.' She sighed, and tried to turn her musings to pleasanter themes, but with only partial success, until at last she fell into a troubled sleep, during which she dreamed that her father and George and herself were drifting about on a lake in a boat without oars or rudder, at the mercy of the wind and waves. There were many other boats within sight, all oarless and rudderless, and all drifting helplessly like their own. At last one of these, in which she observed her mother,

was swamped, and loud cries were raised for help. She awoke in a cold perspiration, trembling and frightened.

'Hillo, there! Bob! get up and help! Get up, ye hog-headed critter. Get up! We're drowned.' And she heard a loud drumming noise, evidently on the back-door of the house.

CONCERNING THE ANIMALS OF NATAL.

NATAL has become such a popular colony of late years, particularly for those who have money and time for a few months' trip, that it may interest those proposing to visit it to hear something about some of the wild animals in that colony. It is often difficult for people to get rid of the feeling that there will be wild beasts all about, when they go to a country which they have been accustomed to associate with the idea of them. For my part, on first going to Africa I should not have been surprised to see a lion awaiting my arrival on the seashore. Nearly all persons have a difficulty in overcoming their dread of snakes. It was some months before I became convinced that they were not the ordinary inhabitants of every house, like flies, spiders, and other unavoidable society, which need not be particularised. Now, if I had known beforehand what I really had to expect in the shape of wild animals, I should not have wasted so much unnecessary anxiety about the snakes, or have been nearly frightened out of my senses one evening, when riding near Maritzburg, by something that I thought was a tiger going to spring upon me, when the truth is that this animal is unknown in Natal. Therefore, that others may be saved from similar mistakes, I will tell what I know, after some years' residence in the country, of such animals as really exist there, or rather what I can recollect of those that are likely to come under notice, for of course there are many which would only interest a naturalist and be sought out by him.

There are no tigers in Africa. This is a fact which is not generally known, for one constantly hears of 'tiger'-hunts at the Cape—a mistake that is caused by the native habit of calling any creature belonging to the cat or tiger family, a 'tiger.' Colonists also fall into the same mistake. Panthers and leopards are indiscriminately 'tigers' to the Kafir, and the wild-cats are all 'tiger-cats;' and even these so-called 'tigers,' which are in reality a small kind of leopard, have become so rare in the civilised parts, that a 'tiger'-hunt there is now a rare diversion.

Leopards are exceedingly shy creatures. As the farms and villages have increased, they have retreated further inland, so that the report of one being seen about a village or farm creates quite a sensation, and he is soon hunted and killed, or driven back to his proper domain. The increasing scarcity of this particular kind of 'game,' though a matter of lament to sportsmen, is fortunate for the farmer, as these animals are terrible robbers. The depredations which even one will commit in a herd or flock are ruinous, because they not only kill what they

eat at the time, but they like to have a well-filled larder, and when they get a chance, lay up provisions in some secret place for a future day, a leopard not being, I imagine, over-particular as to the state of preservation his dinner may be in when he requires it. This is such a difficult animal to get at, that a Kaffir who manages to kill one is regarded as a kind of hero, and receives an ovation from his brother-Kaffirs, who at the same time are not a little envious of him who has earned such a distinction. A leopard is a great prize to a Kaffir. Its teeth and claws he strings together for a necklace, and very well they look glistening against his dark skin; the hide he makes into a *carross* or rug; and the tail is dangled by a string from his waist. If he happens to have several of these ornaments hung round him, he is looked upon as a great swell, quite in full dress indeed. Kaffirs seem to think that there is something royal about a leopard's skin, and their chiefs' thrones are often composed of one thrown over a mound of earth.

Though the leopard is so scarce in Natal that persons need have little fear of coming face to face with one, yet there is a smaller edition of the same tribe which is more to be dreaded, on account of its frequent and daring depredations in the poultry-yard. This is the 'tiger-cat,' or, properly speaking, bush-cat. Wherever there are fowls to be had, these creatures will haunt the place, and take every one, unless the fowls are securely shut up. They break through the Kaffir-built huts, which people often unwisely keep their fowls in, as a neighbour of ours found to his cost, for one morning all his fowls were strewn about dead in the fowlhouse, killed by the tiger-cat. These creatures are much larger than the common cat, and very fierce and strong, though capable of being tamed.

Another kind of cat also does a deal of harm in Natal, namely, the common cat run wild. Cats get driven away from home, or left behind when people leave their farms; these colonise, and become great pests. When we left our house, there was a brood of kittens on the roof which we could not get near; they were perfectly wild. I have heard people say that these cats become fiercer and do more harm than even the bush-cats.

There are some other enemies to poultry of all kinds, which should be carefully kept at a distance. One of these is the jackal, the black-backed one being the most common in Natal. This animal is gifted with a rapacious appetite, to which nothing comes amiss. He will walk off with any small, weak creatures that come in his way. Fowls, young pigs, lambs, and even small puppies are never safe from him; and he has been known to enter houses and take even the *cooked* meat. Luckily, they, too, are getting scarcer in Natal, though there are still a number left about Cape Town. The Kaffirs make splendid *carrosses* of their skins, particularly of the rarer silver jackal, a very handsome animal, which skins they sew together with perfectly even stitches. The most skilled workwoman could not do them better, though the process must require a deal of patience, from the peculiar manner in which they sew. They punch holes with a strong thorn in the edges of

the things they want to fasten together, and then pass a long piece of sinew as fine as a thread backwards and forwards through the holes.

Another South African animal much sought after for the sake of its pretty fur must also be refused admittance to the fowlhouse. It is one of the smallest of foes, and can therefore creep through a very small hole. It is called the *asse* or *caama*. It does not kill fowls. Its speciality is eggs of all kinds. Even the egg of the ostrich is not safe from it. As its teeth are too small to break through the shell, it rolls the eggs about until they smash against the other eggs, or something hard. They are excessively greedy. I have had a nestful of eggs taken off in no time, no doubt by one of these creatures. They have no objection to an egg having been sat upon; addled ones and all kinds are acceptable.

The *iguana*—a species of lizard—is another dainty animal that prefers poultry to coarser fare. It prowls about at night, on the lookout for any unlucky hen which may be sitting—as is often the case in the 'bush'—near the house, and quickly captures it. I believe it will even go up the trees after its favourite food, fowls in Natal not unfrequently roosting out of doors, for want of a proper fowlhouse. The Kaffirs say that the *iguanas* themselves taste like a chicken, and are very good; but an epicure would scarcely trust to a Kaffir's opinion as to what is or is not fit for the table. I should not like to eat a bit of anything that looks so like a diminutive crocodile, a good-sized one being about two feet long. They are shy by nature, and will glide away quickly into any cover at hand, when they can; but they are fierce when brought to bay.

Lions no longer exist in Natal. A lion would be considered almost as great a curiosity there, and create almost as much commotion, as if it appeared at large in England.

Elephants and buffaloes have also retreated in later years to wilder and lonelier regions, though some of the older colonists can remember them about the Berea, a wooded hill near Durban. They are still to be seen in the neighbourhood of Cape Town. Both are in great request—buffaloes for their hides, which are made into trextoes, rheimes, and straps, and such things as require great strength without flexibility; and elephants, on account of both skin and flesh. A portion of the latter the Kaffirs eat fresh, and the rest they make into *bil-tongue*, or jerked meat. The fat they keep for rubbing themselves with, for a Kaffir never thinks his toilet complete unless he is well greased all over. One of their methods of cooking elephant is rather curious. They light a big fire, let it burn slowly down, then dig a hole where the fire has been, put the meat into the hot earth, and leave it until done. I am afraid it must be rather underdone as a rule, but Kaffirs do not mind that; they eat their meat all but raw.

Wild pigs still frequent some parts of Natal, the Berea bush being a favourite haunt of theirs. They live on all kinds of roots, and are particularly fond of a hard-shelled kind of orange filled with seeds, which grows near the Natal forests. The Kaffirs are rather afraid of these pigs; they say that the wounds they give are very difficult to heal. Still, they do kill them, when they

get a chance, without running much risk; and though a Kaffir would not touch a bit of tame pig, for fear of eating his grandmother—whose soul, after death, he believes may have found a porcine abode—he makes a feast off its wild relation very contentedly. These animals do a great deal of harm in robbing gardens, and it is generally during these marauding expeditions that they meet their fate from the assegais of the Kaffirs who are lying in wait for them.

The rhinoceros is not found nearer than the Limpopo River. He is hunted by the natives for his horn, which they make into *knobkerries*, whips, and other things. The hippopotamus is also scarce in the civilised parts of South Africa. I heard a report of one being seen in the Ungeni near Howick, twelve miles from Maritzburg; but it took itself off when it discovered that it had attracted notice. In regions where they abound they do a deal of harm amongst the Kaffirs' *mealie* crops, eating up some, and trampling the rest under their great feet.

Altogether, what with the larger animals taking flight, and the more inoffensive becoming yearly reduced by the natives, sport is certainly at a low ebb in Natal, and those who go there for that purpose find that they have to seek it further afield. There is some semblance of it kept up, but not enough to satisfy an ardent sportsman. There was at one time a pack of hounds at Maritzburg; and there are still a limited number of antelopes left to hunt, and otters of a large fierce kind are pretty plentiful. There are four kinds of antelopes commonly to be met with in the territory, the *duyker* being the most common. This is a very small animal, so sly in its ways, that if it thinks any one is coming, it will creep under or behind a bush, and wait until he has passed. The *orebi* go in large herds in the plains; and the *rietbok* and *bushbuck* live chiefly in or near the 'bush.' These are hunted by Englishmen almost entirely for sport, as, excepting the flesh of the eland, all South African venison is dry and tasteless, and would require much better cooking than it generally gets, to make it pleasant. Further, away in Basutoland, Griqualand, beyond the Vaal River and in the Free State, the graceful *springbok* may be seen in countless herds, the most nervous of nervous animals, which will never venture, if it can avoid it, where the foot of man has pressed. It will endeavour to jump over a road or track, rather than step on it. Sportsmen say it is the most difficult of all animals to shoot. Its name was given to it by the Dutch from its habit of leaping into the air, apparently all about nothing.

In the same regions live also the *blesbok*, *hartebeste*, *koodoo*, and *quagga*, the last much sought after by the natives on account of its skin, and also for eating. Hunting in Natal is confined entirely to that of the antelope and the otter, unless, as I said before, a strange leopard happens to put in an appearance, and the shooting is very disappointing work.

There are partridges very like ours, but larger. The male bird is without the brownish feathers in the shape of a horse-shoe on its breast, and their call is longer and louder than that of our birds. Pheasants and snipe are there also, and differ a good deal from those at home. To

use a sporting phrase, pheasants *tree* more, and their call is different from that of ours. They are larger, differently marked, and, strange to say, tamer and more easily approached. As there is no attempt at preserving game, it becomes the property of any creature able to prey upon it, and is in consequence not very plentiful. Hares, smaller than English ones, and with whiter flesh, abound; they may be bought from the natives for a shilling, and are very good eating. There is also the *khipdas* or rock-rabbit, to be found in great numbers about Table Mountain. This animal is much sought after and eaten by the natives. Though called a rabbit, he appears to be more like a diminutive hippopotamus in many of his characteristics.

The plover, the guinea-fowl, and a large kind of wood-pigeon, all fall to the gun of the sportsman, and give him plenty of trouble, they are so wary. The *pow*—larger than a turkey—is somewhat tasteless, but where wild-fowl are not so plentiful as could be wished, it passes muster very well. As to the birds that would interest those who are making a collection, their name is legion.

There are wild-dogs still about Cape Town. A few years ago, they were so numerous that they used to make raids in large packs into the town; but, like other wild animals, they have been taught better manners now. The woods in Natal are full of monkeys, principally the small kind that go about at home with barrel-organ men. They are very shy, and keep themselves to themselves, the only harm they do being an occasional robbery from an apple or peach orchard. They are incessantly chattering and screaming, which makes it advisable not to live near 'bush.' There are baboons also in some parts of Natal, savage, disagreeable creatures, and generally dangerous when full grown. People who get them for pets usually have to destroy them after a time.

A pretty pet is the little *meer-cat*, a gentle, timid thing, easily tamed. It will sit on the hearth, follow people it knows, and come at call. It is like the *ichneumon*; but in spite of its great resemblance, naturalists will not allow that it belongs to the same family, because it has one toe less on the hind-foot, and the number of teeth is not the same.

Some persons make a pet of a chameleon, and he is easily tamed so far as losing all fear of those about him; but he is not of an affectionate disposition, and will, if it pleases him so to do, take himself off from the house where he has been made much of. He is generally allowed to stray about as he likes; and though he cannot be called ornamental, with his little crocodile-like body, large head, and ugly swivel eyes, he is useful in destroying flies, mosquitoes, and other insects which abound in Natal houses, and which he catches in a dexterous manner with his enormously long tongue. It is now pretty well known that the chameleon does not change colour so continually, as was once popularly supposed; though I have seen a faintish red tint come over it when put upon scarlet, and it varies from a greenish gray to a brown tint.

The prettiest African pet is the *Maholi Galago*, a beautiful little animal. I had one which became perfectly tame; but it would take too much space

to enumerate its lovely qualities. It had a bad one too—a very snappish temper; and I was made to feel its sharp little teeth before it would let me handle it. It is difficult to get, and has to be taken when a baby, before it leaves the nest. It is very fond of spiders, particularly the horrid fat spotty ones which infest the verandas.

The hyena still slinks about in some parts of Natal. He is the best of scavengers; nothing comes amiss to him, even the hardest bones being crunched up by his strong jaws. He prefers dead to live prey; and in a country where the domestic animals die off so, he is not often at a loss for a dead cow. He sometimes becomes a pest to villages, owing to the native custom in some parts of putting out their dead on the *veldt* instead of burying them, which is apt to give the hyena, as well as other animals, including vultures, a taste for human flesh.

The African chetah is not tamed for hunting, like the Indian one; but he could be, I should think. They are very tamable, and purr when taken notice of.

The ant-bear is like a small pig, with a long snout; he is a night-animal, and has a most unpleasant habit of making holes in the *veldt*. Ferns and long grass conceal these, and dire is the consequence often to rider and horse. There are few who have ridden much out there who have not some time or other got a disagreeable shock and roll-over, if nothing worse, from the ant-bears' burrowings. The coast-mole is almost worse. He makes his underground roads close to the surface, which looks solid, but breaks in as soon as trodden upon. Porcupines are difficult to kill. The Kaffirs light fires in their burrows to force them out, and then hit them on the nose. The Kaffirs prize their flesh as well as the quills.

Though some kinds of creatures are plentiful in Natal, they are mostly of a kind that need not be dreaded. The only one to be really feared is the snake. In country places, a person must be cautious, the puff-adder being particularly dangerous on account of its sleepy habits, which make one apt to tread on it. I knew of one recovery from its bite, but it was a rare case.

A REMARKABLE METEOR.

FROM AN ANGLO-INDIAN.

Who is there who at some time or other has not been delighted, perhaps astounded, as the depths of a dark sky have been suddenly illumined by the blaze of a passing meteor? In all ages these mysterious visitants have been objects of marked interest, often of superstitious regard; and their sudden appearance, their gorgeous hues, their swift flight, and then their rapid quenching in the darkness whence they issued, combine in maintaining the interest with which their erratic movements are still watched. Still greater interest is attached to those meteoric wanderers which, few and far between, coming within the attraction of gravitation, have been precipitated on our earth, giving rise to much disputation as to their nature and origin.

If the flight of a solitary meteor excites admira-

tion and awe, we can understand the sensations of those who have been privileged to witness those marvellous meteoric showers some of which have become historical. It is not one, two, ten, a dozen, or twenty meteors which flash across the entranced gaze of the fortunate and delighted spectator, but meteors in hundreds. Who could witness unmoved a sight like this, thus described by Major Strickland?—'I think it was on the 14th November 1833, that I witnessed one of the most splendid spectacles in the world. My wife awoke me between two and three o'clock to tell me that it lightened incessantly. I immediately arose and looked out of the window, when I was perfectly dazzled by a brilliant display of falling stars. As this extraordinary phenomenon did not disappear, we dressed ourselves and went to the door, where we continued to watch the beautiful showers of fire till after daylight. These luminous bodies became visible in the zenith, taking the north-east in their descent. Few of them appeared to be of lesser size than a star of the first magnitude; very many of them seemed larger than Venus; two of them seemed half as large as the moon. I should think, without exaggeration, that several hundreds of these beautiful stars were visible at the same time, all falling in the same direction, and leaving in their wake a long stream of fire. This appearance continued without intermission from the time I got up till after sunrise. No description of mine can give an adequate idea of the magnificence of this scene, which I would not willingly have missed. This remarkable phenomenon occurred on a clear and frosty night, when the ground was covered with an inch of snow.'

Every one fond of watching the night-sky can refer with pleasure to one or more meteoric apparitions, and can dwell on some observed facts new to his experience; thus I was enabled on two occasions to establish undoubtedly the fact that the train of the meteor is not merely the impression left on the retina by the rapidly falling body. In April 1871, while quartered at Morar (India), I suddenly noticed a blaze in the south-eastern sky; and rushing out eastwards to ascertain the cause, I was too late to see the meteor, which had passed westwards over the roof of the barrack; but I distinctly saw its brilliant train. In the same station and in the same month, but in this year (1884), I saw a brilliant white meteor drop from the zenith and explode. Its tail retained a distinct existence and movement of its own for several minutes, and seemed gradually to be blown away into space, changing form as it disappeared. On another occasion I witnessed the double explosion of a meteor falling from the zenith; that is, it fell and exploded, then fell again and exploded a second time. Of course, the second flight and explosion must have been that of a huge fragment moving in the same line, for there seemed no diminution in the size of the falling body.

Further, I have seen one of these bodies take an erratic flight, presenting the appearance of a flash of lightning. Lastly, in 1874, I witnessed the flight of a small meteor which I could almost have touched. I was driving eastwards along the South Road in Lucknow, when a minute red-hot body like a cricket-ball passed in front of and apparently just above me, from north to south; and

I fancied I could have touched it with my whip.*

With these introductory remarks, let me offer my short story. We had left Aden, and were steaming rapidly Bombay-wards, over a placid sea, under a magnificent star-lit sky; I was occupying my favourite resort, the platform of the gangway ladder, of the good ship *Deccan*, and Colonel P—— shared it with me. Our conversation turned on the magnificence of our surroundings. Above us was the heavenly host, each unit shining with the splendour peculiar to tropical skies; beneath us, great masses of phosphorescence rolling in the depths, seemed to emulate the stars above; and behind us, Venus cast a long brilliant reflection on the deep. While watching her effulgence, Colonel P—— suddenly drew my attention with: 'By Jove, H——, she is coming at us!' And true enough it seemed so for a moment; but immediately we both recognised the fact that a great meteor was approaching; and no sooner was this fact apparent, than it had passed ahead and disappeared under the following astonishing circumstances. At first, of a dazzling white, it rivalled Venus in brilliancy, and seemed to emerge from her; then the white rapidly passed into red, then dull red, almost black, and in this condition it flew over our heads, passing over the *Deccan*, and falling into the sea with a splash, apparently a mile ahead of her, and slightly on her starboard bow. Involuntarily, we both rushed forward to see the fall, but were too late; but every one on deck heard it; and we all saw and heard the out-splashed water falling back into the sea. As the steamer sped on, we passed over, at an interval, I should say, of five hundred yards, three gigantic bubbles of hot air gurgling up from the depths, and marking the slanting course of the meteor to the bottom of the sea.

This adventure formed a topic of conversation during the remainder of our voyage to Bombay.

PRESERVATION OF MONUMENTS.

A Society has been formed called 'The National Society for preserving the Memorials of the Dead in the Churches and Churchyards of Great Britain,' for preventing the neglect and wanton destruction which so often overtake not only tombs and monuments of the dead, but curious, interesting, and even sacred relics. It is a well-known fact that in altering churches or re-arranging churchyards, the most reckless indifference has often been exhibited in the manner in which memorials of the dead and church fittings or property have been handled. A few years ago it was a common thing to find in some of the Kentish churches the old fonts disposed of either to mend roads or for building purposes; and the old font of Harrow Church, on being offered for sale for that purpose many years ago, was purchased by a lady and placed in a nook in her garden, to rescue it from such degradation. The writer remembers, when a youth, seeing at a large and wealthy farmer's in the west of England, the beautifully carved oaken altar from the neighbouring parish church used as the kitchen table! And the employment of tombstones and other memorials of the

dead for road repairs was at one period only too common. It is to prevent such unnecessary destruction that the above Society has been formed; and let us hope that, as education and intelligence advance, its endeavours will be well supported by all classes in so good a work.

TO A BROTHER POET.

ONCE more the treasured lyre I raise,
That breathes too oft of vain regret,
To thank thee for thy kindly praise,
Dear friend, whom I have never met;
For oh, it is so sweet to know,
Whene'er in loneliness we sigh,
Though silent tears in secret flow,
There are true kindred spirits nigh.

We love to tell in plaintive song
Our longing for the streams and flowers—
To feel, amid life's busy throng,
Some kindred heart responds to ours.
So pausing in the noisy crowd
To listen to thy friendly strain,
No wonder that I feel so proud
To know I have not sung in vain.

Thou, humble bard, such praise as thine
My lyre's most grateful songs inspire;
But oh, such feeble powers are mine,
That when I touch that trembling lyre,
It flutters like some captive bird,
Nor tells one half my heart would say;
For ere its timid voice is heard,
In very shame it dies away.

We singers of the human race,
Joined in one great poetic band,
Can feel amid the realms of space
Soul answering soul, hand grasping hand.
Around the sacred shrine we kneel
Of Poesy, and nought can stir
The golden chains from those who feel
United in their love for her.

Not mine the wish for high renown,
For earthly honours fade and die;
And, oh, how oft the laurel crown
On tresses blanched with grief doth lie!
I only ask in years to come—
Nay, smile not at this hope of mine—
When this poor quivering lyre is dumb,
A memory in such hearts as thine;

That when the pure and lowly meet
At evening round the ingle-side,
Some friend may tell—oh, record sweet!—
'With us she lived, with us she died.'
This heart would thrill, these cheeks would glow
With honest pride, were I but sure
Some friendly voice would whisper low:
'She fondly loved the toiling poor.'

That little felt, with softened sound,
May sometimes seek my humble grave;
That childish forms may cluster round
The spot where only weeds may grow;
To whisper how my heart could feel
For all their simple joys and pains;
That I from heaven may see them kneel
To deck my grave with daisy chains.

FANNY FORRESTER.

* This may have possibly been an electric fireball.
—ED.